

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claim 2; AMEND claims 1 and 3-8 and ADD claim 9 in accordance with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) A cross-site search method used in a server that connects to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network and that requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from said information retrieval sites, said method comprising:

recording a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function are defined for each of said information retrieval sites into storage, said conversion function converting a description of ~~a~~the search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of ~~an~~each of said information retrieval sites, and said authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of ~~an~~each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond search results;

recording predetermined sets of authentication information and ID information into said storage for each of said information retrieval sites that require authentication and restrict number of accesses, the authentication information being assigned to said server by each of said information retrieval sites;

recording a process ID into the ID information of one of the sets of the authentication information when the authentication information in the one of the sets is used to access a corresponding information retrieval site;

reading ~~a~~from said storage the script definition and a corresponding ~~to the~~set of the authentication information and the ID information for one of said information retrieval sites designated by the user terminal~~from said storage~~;

transmitting, to the one of said information retrieval sites, the authentication information in the corresponding set of the authentication information and the ID information when the ID information in the corresponding set is blank;

receiving ~~certification~~ the authentication from the one of said information retrieval sites by executing the authentication function when the script definition for the one of said information retrieval sites includes the authentication function;

converting said search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the one of said information retrieval sites by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting a search request according to the converted search condition to the ~~designated~~ one of said information retrieval sites;

receiving the search results from the one of said information retrieval sites that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and

transmitting the received search results to the user terminal.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The cross-site search method according to claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting authentication information assigned by ~~an~~ the one of said information retrieval sites to the one of said information retrieval sites according to ~~an~~ the authentication function to receive ~~certification~~ the authentication from the one of said information retrieval sites when the script definition for the one of said information retrieval sites includes said authentication function.

4. (Currently Amended) The cross-site search method according to claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ communication between said server and said user terminal, and ~~the~~ communication between said server and said information retrieval sites use TCP/IP and HTTP, respectively.

5. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with a cross-site search program ~~used in that when executed by a server, connected that connects~~ to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network, ~~and that requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal to receive search results from the information retrieval sites, said program causing said server to execute the procedures of by~~ performing a method comprising:

recording a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function are defined for each of said information retrieval sites into storage, said conversion function

converting a description of ~~a~~the search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of ~~an~~each of said information retrieval sites, and said authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of ~~an~~each of said information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond search results;

recording predetermined sets of authentication information and ID information into said storage for each of said information retrieval sites that require authentication and restrict number of accesses, the authentication information being assigned to said server by each of said information retrieval sites;

recording a process ID into the ID information of one of the sets of the authentication information when the authentication information in the one of the sets is used to access a corresponding information retrieval site;

reading ~~a~~from said storage the script definition and a corresponding ~~to the~~set of the authentication information and the ID information for one of said information retrieval sites designated by the user terminal~~from said storage;~~

transmitting, to the one of said information retrieval sites, the authentication information in the corresponding set of the authentication information and the ID information when the ID information in the corresponding set is blank;

receiving ~~certification~~authentication from the one of said information retrieval sites by executing the authentication function when the script definition for the one of said information retrieval sites includes the authentication function;

converting said search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the one of said information retrieval sites by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting a search request according to the converted search condition to the ~~designated~~one of said information retrieval sites;

receiving the search results from the one of said information retrieval sites that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and

transmitting the received search results to said user terminal.

6. (Currently Amended) The ~~cross-site search program~~computer readable medium according to claim 5, wherein said cross-site search program is a CGI-Common Gateway Interface program.

7. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with a cross-site search program running on a computer connected to a user terminal and a number of information retrieval sites through a network, said program causing said computer to execute the procedures of perform a method comprising:

accepting designation of ~~any one~~ of said information retrieval sites with a search condition by said user terminal;

identifying a script definition corresponding to the ~~designated one of said~~ information retrieval sites among a number of script definitions, said script definition defining a conversion function that converts a description of ~~a the~~ search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of ~~an the one of said~~ information retrieval sites;

identifying authentication information whose ID information is blank corresponding to the one of said information retrieval sites among predetermined sets of the authentication information and ID information that require authentication and restrict number of accesses, the authentication information being assigned to said server by each of said information retrieval sites;

recording a process ID into ID information of one of the sets of the authentication information when the authentication information in the one of the sets is used to access a corresponding information retrieval sites;

transmitting, to the one of said information retrieval sites, the authentication information in a corresponding set of the authentication information and the ID information when the ID information in the corresponding set is blank;

receiving ~~certification authentication~~ from the one of said information retrieval sites by executing an authentication function when the script definition for the one of said information retrieval sites includes said authentication function;

converting the search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the one of said information retrieval sites by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting a search request according to the converted search condition to the one of said designated information retrieval sites;

receiving the search results from the one of said information retrieval sites that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and

transmitting the received search results to said user terminal.

8. (Currently Amended) A server that connects to a user terminal and information retrieval sites through a network and that requests information retrieval according to a search condition designated by said user terminal ~~to receive and receives~~ search results from the information retrieval sites, said server comprising:

receiving means ~~that receive~~ for receiving said search condition from said user terminal;

recording means ~~that record~~ for recording a script definition in which a conversion function and an authentication function for each of said information retrieval sites into said storage, the conversion function converting a description of ~~a the~~ search condition in compliance with a predetermined description rule into a description in compliance with a description rule of ~~an each of said~~ information retrieval sites, and the authentication function being used for an authentication procedure of ~~an each of said~~ information retrieval sites that requires authentication as a condition to respond search results;

recording means for recording predetermined sets of authentication information and ID information into said storage for each of said information retrieval sites that require authentication and restrict number of accesses, the authentication information being assigned to said server by each of said information retrieval sites;

recording means for recording a process ID into the ID information of one of the sets of the authentication information when the authentication information in the one of the sets is used to access a corresponding information retrieval site;

reading means ~~that read a~~ for reading from said storage the script definition and a corresponding ~~to the set of the authentication information and the ID information for one of said~~ information retrieval sites designated by the user terminal ~~from said storage~~;

transmitting means for transmitting, to the one of said information retrieval sites, the authentication information in the corresponding set of the authentication information and the ID information when the ID information in the corresponding set is blank;

receiving means ~~that receive certification~~ for receiving authentication from the one of said information retrieval sites by executing the authentication function when the script definition for the one of said information retrieval sites includes the authentication function;

converting means ~~that convert~~ for converting the search condition designated by the user terminal into a search condition in compliance with a description rule of the one of said information retrieval sites by executing the conversion function in the script definition;

transmitting means ~~that transmit~~ for transmitting a search request according to the converted search condition to the ~~designated one of said~~ information retrieval sites;

receiving means ~~that receive~~ for receiving the search results from ~~the~~ said one of said information retrieval sites that has retrieved information in response to said search request; and
transmitting means ~~that transmit~~ for transmitting the received search results to the user terminal.

9. (new) A computer system connected via at least one network to information retrieval sites and a terminal requesting information based on a search condition, comprising:

a network interface connected to the at least one network;

a storage storing a script definition, including an authentication function, and storing predetermined sets of authentication information and ID information for each of the information retrieval sites that requires authentication and that restrict number of accesses, the authentication information being assigned to said computer system by each of the information retrieval sites; and

a processor, coupled to said network interface and said storage,

reading from said storage the script definition and a corresponding set of the authentication information and the ID information for one of the information retrieval sites,

transmitting, via said network interface, the authentication information to the one of the information retrieval sites when ID information in the authentication information is blank,

transmitting, via said network interface, a search request to the one of the information retrieval sites,

receiving search results via said network interface in response to the search request, and

transmitting the search results to said terminal via said network interface.